

Town of
Star Valley Ranch

**Finance Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2023 2:00pm**

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call of Board Members, Statement of Quorum**

Meeting was called to order at 2 PM by the Chairman. Members Jay Averett, Rand Bitter, David Sankaran, and Martin Muschaweck, and Town Clerk Gray were present. In addition, Council Liaison Denney attended, and Mayor Buyers attended a portion of the meeting.

2. **Approve Agenda**

Agenda was approved by board motion.

3. **Review of FAB Charter**

The Board reviewed its charter and activities completed in the past year. The board and council representatives present were pleased with the FAB's advisory work on the Town's Cash Investments Policy and the FAB's review of the budget. However, the FAB members and Town Council members present noted that there was an opportunity to enhance the level of collaboration and engagement with the Town Council in the future.

Agreement to pursue collaboration projects

Discussion ensued and a number of collaborative projects were agreed, to include; improving the Town's financial reporting, enhancing the Town's annual planning process, and advising the Town Council regarding large capital projects.

Bridge Replacement Projects

The Board and Town Council representatives present discussed, once again, the potential need to replace the Middle Branch bridge. First, as a reminder, here is the conclusion reached by the FAB and communicated in it's report to the Town Council on this matter from July of 2023:

"...the Board felt strongly that the new inclusion of \$500,000 for replacement of the Middle Branch Road Bridge was not an effective use of such a large amount of the Town's reserves..."

The FAB continued to advocate for a thorough analysis of options for the Middle Branch bridge, including a pedestrian only bridge, a golf cart bridge, a road replacement and to leave the road closed. The Mayor indicated that such options and analysis are not yet available, but will be before a final determination is considered by the Town Council. Also, FAB member Bitter continued to advocate for the Town to call a special meeting to review the options and cost/benefit analysis with the citizens prior to the Town Council taking final action.

The Mayor updated the FAB on the latest developments regarding this matter. First, she mentioned that the Hardman bridge has also been deemed in disrepair. Second, she told the FAB that the town was working to apply for SLIB/ARPA grant funds to potentially cover 50% of the cost of replacing both bridges. The current estimate mentioned was ~\$500,000 per bridge, for a total project cost of ~\$1,000,000, with 50% potentially funded by SLIB/ARPA grants and the remaining \$500,000 coming from the Town's road reserves. The Mayor confirmed that applying for the grants was not binding and that after learning if the SLIB/ARPA funds are indeed granted to the town, the Town would be in position to analyze the benefits and net costs to the town of the potential projects, and make a final determination on how to proceed. The Mayor went on to mention that SLIB has a policy of negatively viewing future grant requests if the applicant has a history of requesting and then not following through on projects. We note that one effective way to avoid a time-crunch and increase the Town's odds of securing future grants, is to have a list of priority projects sufficiently scoped, documented and vetted such that the Town could apply for new grants quickly and with confidence in the projects' viability.

While FAB members remained skeptical that the cost/benefit analysis of replacing the Middle Branch bridge would result in a net benefit and be a wise use of our road reserve funds, given the Mayor's confirmation that applying for the grants was not binding, and her commitment after learning if the SLIB/ARPA funds are indeed granted to the town to perform a cost/benefit analysis in collaboration with the FAB before making a final determination on how to proceed, the FAB concurred that applying for potential grant funds was a worthwhile effort.

Finally, the FAB requested that the Town notify the FAB if/when grant funding is secured for potential replacement of the Hardman and Middle Branch bridges, and when the Engineer's report with options and cost estimates is available for FAB review. Further, the FAB requested to collaborate proactively with the Town Council to review the bridge options and costs prior to the Town Council reaching a determination of how to proceed.

4. Monthly Financial Statement Review

The Board members did not have any questions regarding the latest financial statements. Council Liaison Denney asked about road operations costs vs. budget. After discussion, Mr. Sankaran agreed to look into the monthly trend of expenses compared to budget with the assistance of Clerk Gray.

5. Old Business – none

6. New Business

Review FY22 Audited Financial Statements

The Board discussed the recently issued Audited Financial Statements, noting no significant audit findings and a so-called "clean" audit opinion was issued by the Independent Auditor.

Town Financial Reporting Improvement Project

Chairman Sankaran briefed the Board on his initial assessment of the opportunity to improve the Town's financial reporting. All agreed to pursue this project, and Clerk Gray was asked to coordinate with Mr. Sankaran to complete the project.

7. Discuss FAB Membership Plans

The two FAB members whose terms expire in June of 2023, Mr. Muschaweck and Mr. Bitter, have asked the Mayor to consider them for reappointment to a new 3-year term.

8. Set FAB Calendar through January 2024

Future FAB meetings will be at 2pm on April 4, July 18, October 10 of 2023, and January 9, 2024.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by motion at 3:30 PM.